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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 001562

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA
ALSO FOR IO A/S HOOK AND PDAS WARLICK
P FOR DRUSSELL AND RRANGASWAMY
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/SCHEDLBAUER/GERMAIN
NSC FOR ABRAMS/YERGER/MCDERMOTT/RAMCHAND
JERUSALEM FOR REFCOORD CKAPLAN
PRM FOR WITTEN/BROOKS-RUBIN/RAMGOOLIE/THIBAUT
INL FOR BLOOMQUIST/STUART,
AID/ME FOR LAUDATO/BEVER/SCOTT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2018

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: UNRWA WARNS A/S HOOK ABOUT DETERIORATING
SITUATION IN BADDAWI PALESTINIAN CAMP

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) During a October 30 meeting with visiting Assistant Secretary for International Organization (IO) Affairs Brian Hook and the Ambassador, UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Deputy Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi and UNRWA Lebanon Country Director Salvatore Lombardo warned that the ingredients for increased tension between Nahr al-Barid Palestinians and Beddawi Palestinians were present in the Beddawi Camp in north Lebanon. Grandi noted the difficulties UNRWA employees face traveling back and forth to the West Bank. Grandi and Lombardo stressed the important role UNRWA plays in the lives of many Palestinians, especially in Lebanon and thanked A/S Hook for the USG's continued assistance to UNRWA. End summary.

UNRWA SUPPORT A NECESSITY
FOR REFUGEE COMMUNITY

2. (C) Visiting IO A/S Brian Hook and the Ambassador met with UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi and UNRWA Lebanon Country Director Salvatore Lombardo on October 30. IO Special Assistant Erin McLinn and PolOffs also attended the meeting. Grandi briefed A/S Hook on UNRWA's work serving the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East. Lombardo noted that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are worse off than in any other country, because of the many restrictions placed on Palestinians by the Government of Lebanon (GOL) regarding the ability of refugees to work, attend universities, or receive health care in Lebanon.

3. (C) Lombardo also stressed the important role UNRWA plays in providing services to Palestinian refugees. He added that without UNRWA services, especially in Lebanon, the Palestinian refugee community would be more prone to turn to extremist groups that could offer such services. A/S Hook noted the good work UNRWA has done serving Palestinian

refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region. Grandi added that UNRWA was in the process of commemorating its sixtieth anniversary and wants to use the occasion to re-brand the UNRWA name and image to the international donor community. A well-known advertising firm is creating a new brand pro bono for UNRWA and the 60th anniversary.

BEDDAWI HAS ALL THE
RECIPES FOR CLASHES

¶4. (C) Lombardo said the mood in the Beddawi refugee camp in north Lebanon, home to around 17,000 of Nahr al-Barid's refugee population, had become quite tense in recent weeks. Many residents displaced from Nahr al-Barid during the 2007 fighting there that destroyed that camp moved to the nearby Beddawi camp. Before the arrival of the Nahr al-Barid refugees, Beddawi was one of Lebanon's most stable camps, Lombardo noted, and factions within the camp were moderate groups that had a good relationship with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). However, given the strain on the camp due to the arrival of the Nahr al-Barid refugees and the lack of resources overall for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, tensions have begun to rise and may escalate if Nahr al-Barid refugees are not moved from Beddawi.

REGIONAL POLITICS EFFECTS
REFUGEES STATE OF MIND

¶5. (C) Grandi then switched topics to the issue of Israel's
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security barrier and the difficulties UNRWA employees face traveling back and forth to the West Bank. A/S Hook noted that the wall had improved Israel's security, which had improved the opportunity for peace talks to proceed. However, A/S Hook noted that the security wall also hurt the Palestinians' economic situation, which may offset some of the gains achieved by the barrier for the peace process.

¶6. (C) All sides have a lot of work to do to achieve peace, but UN resolutions condemning Israeli actions do little to advance the peace agenda, A/S Hook said. Grandi acknowledged that it may be difficult for the international community to solve the political issues affecting Palestinian refugees, but donors could help improve the lives and conditions of the Palestinians living in the camps.

UNRWA THANKFUL
FOR USG SUPPORT

¶7. (C) Lombardo noted that UNRWA has a small fund set aside within its general budget dedicated for special projects. He added the UNRWA's Management Reform Plan was funded out of the special projects allocation to which the USG contributes. A/S Hook asked Lombardo about the sanitation conditions in the camps and whether or not UNRWA had plans to help address this problem. Better sanitation could reduce the number of medical cases clogging hospitals. Lombardo agreed it's a problem and replied that UNRWA's Camp Improvement Initiative had a component within its plan to address waste water treatment and sewage problems.

¶8. (C) Grandi thanked A/S Hook for the USG's continued support to UNRWA, in particular the \$57 million to UNRWA's 2008 West Bank and Gaza emergency appeal. Grandi said that UNRWA will lobby donors hard to see an increase in donor contributions for next year, admitting that this would be difficult given the global financial crises. Grandi added that he was worried about the strengthening value of the dollar and its effect on UNRWA's operations because UNRWA's General Fund budget is dollar denominated, but some of UNRWA's costs are in Euros translating into an increased cost for UNRWA operations.

19. (U) A/S Hook has cleared this cable.

SISON